

News from Ed Markey

United States Congress

Massachusetts Seventh District

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CONTACT: Tara McGuinness

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Mark Bayer

(202) 225-2836

REP. MARKEY CALLS DECISION TO PERMIT PRIVATE PLANES AT NATIONAL AIRPORT “MISGUIDED”

Washington, DC: Rep. Edward Markey (D-MA), a senior member of the House Committee on Homeland Security, made the following statement in response to reports that the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) will permit private planes to take off and land at Reagan National Airport - most for the first time since Sept. 11, 2001.

“Two weeks after a wayward Cessna caused the evacuation of the White House, Capitol, Supreme Court and other Federal buildings, I am concerned about security risks created by the TSA’s decision to permit such small planes to take-off only seconds from these tempting terrorist targets. While new safeguards will apply to these flights, we should be spending our homeland security resources on more pressing issues such as inspection of all the cargo that is transported on planes carrying millions of passengers every year. The Department of Homeland Security and the FBI recently warned that terrorists may try to use small planes to carry out deadly attacks. Al Qaeda is like water – it seeks the path of least resistance in choosing its targets. Today’s misguided decision puts convenience for a few above commonsense security concerns.

“I can think of no decision more likely to make the enforcement of the no fly zone around the Capitol and the White House a nightmare for our first responders. The lasers deployed to warn pilots entering restricted airspace are ineffective on cloudy days, the influx of small planes in the area will mean many more false alarms sowing chaos and panic, and it will considerably heighten the likelihood of an attack over the city using a small plane carrying an unscreened box diverted from all the unscreened cargo currently flowing through Reagan National Airport.”

This week, Representative Markey will introduce the Strengthen Aviation Security Act, legislation to close dangerous aviation security loopholes that persist almost four years after the September 11th attacks. Security measures in Rep. Markey’s legislation include: a requirement that 100 percent of cargo carried on passenger planes is screened within three years, according to a phased-in schedule; security upgrades at airports serving small, general aviation aircraft; and strengthened perimeter security measures at airports.

For more information on Rep. Markey’s work on aviation security check out:

<http://www.house.gov/markey/airlinesecurity.htm>.

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